

THE REMOVAL

OF

The Crystal Palace.

FOURTH THOUSAND.



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THE inquiry is general, whether the Crystal Palace will be open on the Lord's Day? It is one which cannot be answered without uneasiness. In the course of the debate on the 29th of April, in the House of Commons, respecting the removal of the building out of Hyde Park, one of Her Majesty's Ministers (Lord John Manners) is reported to have expressed himself as follows:—

“ At one of the late public meetings, an able speech in favour of the retention of the building was delivered a few days ago ; but the speaker evidently felt that if the building was retained on its present site, and free access to it allowed the working classes, it must necessarily be open on the Sunday ; and therefore, to meet the objection against its being open on that day, he proposed that the Liturgy of the Church of England should be repeated in one corner, and that every class of Dissent in the metropolis should be appointed preaching-room in other corners of the

“building. Now this was an important view of the
“question; and he begged honourable gentlemen to
“make up their minds whether they would consent
“to open the building on Sundays or not; for if it
“were intended to close the building on Sunday,
“then he maintained, that as that was the only day
“when Hyde Park was accessible to the working
“classes, they closed some twenty acres of that park,
“which had been from time immemorial in the en-
“joyment of the working classes, against those classes.
“If, on the other hand, they proposed to open the
“building on Sunday, then they took the first step—
“and it might be described as a stride—to introduce
“into this country the continental method of observ-
“ing the Sunday. (Hear, hear). Let not the House
“undervalue the importance and magnitude of that
“first step.”

After such remarks, it is very improbable, and it would be highly inconsistent that any proposal to open the building on the Lord's Day should receive any countenance or support from Her Majesty's Government: neither can we suppose that the new Company could for a moment retain the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Albert, if they were to announce any such intention. At the same time, the very suggestion of such a proposal is calculated to create alarm.

It therefore behoves the Christian public to be on their guard, and fully prepared, as far as in them lies, to discountenance any such attempt. With that object

in view, we will submit reasons for thinking that the Crystal Palace, with its gardens and grounds, and all its appendages, ought to be entirely closed during the whole twenty-four hours of the Lord's Day, as was happily the case during all the time that it was used for the Great Exhibition.

1. We have Sabbath desecration enough, by steam-boats,—railway trains,—opened shops,—omnibuses and conveyances of all kinds. The million is already bribed by "Cheap Excursion Trains" to forsake the houses of God and their own homes, and thousands are already enslaved to work on the Lord's Day for the pleasure or profit of others.

2. Every one of these evils will be increased a thousand-fold if the Crystal Palace is opened on the Lord's Day. Not only will trains convey the Sabbath-breaking people to the Exhibition, but allurements will thus be held out to other lines to open excursion trains to London. Omnibuses and cabs almost without number will then ply to the London Bridge Terminus. The passengers must be conveyed back; and thus a perpetual transit to and fro will disturb the peace of the metropolis throughout the whole of that sacred day.

3. A great addition to the railway force must needs be made, and the police multiplied to keep order both in and out of the Crystal Palace. Thus the number of *habitual* Sabbath-breakers will be greatly increased.

4. The villages surrounding the locality, wherever it be, will be next to ruined, as far as peace and

respectability are concerned. Low places of drinking will be erected; and then will follow a gathering round of pickpockets and every species of dissolute characters.

5. However excellent vast museums may be (and excellent they are), and however science may draw away the million from brutal indulgences, and elevate the taste, it cannot take the place of the worship of God, or obedience to His command.

6. Science is not only not religion, but will not lead to it, if religion itself be trampled on in order to enjoy it. Sabbaths spent in scientific pursuits will not lead the mind to God, but from God. There *may* be "in every stone a sermon;" but if God's day be not hallowed, and if His house be forsaken, no sermon will be found in any stone. Truth and piety have nothing to fear, but everything to hope, from the closest investigation, as Bacon, Sir Isaac Newton, and other philosophic and scientific minds, can testify; at the same time, it is far from true that the most scientific are the most eminently religious. Science should be the handmaid of religion, but it cannot be the substitute.

7. The most wondrous productions of nature, from every quarter of the world, and specimens of the most remarkable inventions, will not enlighten the mind like the Bible. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work,"—but the law of the Lord which is perfect, is that which converts the soul. (Ps. xix.) Lord Bacon has well expressed this sentiment, "Thy creatures have been

my books ; but thy Scriptures much more. I have sought Thee in the courts, fields, and gardens, but I have found Thee in Thy Temples."

8. If, to save appearances, the Crystal Palace should be closed in the forenoon of the Lord's Day, this will only assimilate our Sabbath to the low standard of the continental Sabbaths.

9. If we seek to imitate France and Italy, by substituting pleasure for religion on the Lord's Day, we must expect that a Sabbath-breaking population will become as easily given to change and revolution as our continental neighbours.

10. There cannot be, by the Company's own statements, any pecuniary necessity for it. The Great Exhibition has paid well, although it was never opened on the Lord's Day. Why open it now ?

11. We admit that every thing in nature does appear more sublime and wonderful in proportion to our acquaintance with its phenomena, and comprehension of the causes by which it is governed : why not, then, (it may be said,) afford every facility that the many may become acquainted with all these ? We would gladly aid in affording every facility, short of infringing on the law of God. If it be said, that the Lord's Day is the only day on which the many can have access to the Museum and repositories of art : —First, We deny this, and confidently appeal to the millions, both British and foreign, who poured into the Great Exhibition on the six lawful days, and to the net proceeds, £150,000. Secondly, If it was

the only day ; then we boldly say, Science and Information must give place to Revelation ; *that* must be studied first. A blessed immortality cannot be had without the knowledge of the true God and His Son Jesus Christ,—but Heaven may be, and will be, entered by thousands who possess no scientific knowledge. Thirdly, Both may be combined by the diligent pursuit of science, in such leisure hours as can be snatched from the six days' toil ; and the entire dedication of the seventh day to the cultivation of the mind and heart in the worship and service of God, and the study of His enlightening Word.

12. The Great Exhibition was opened with prayer and a solemn invocation of God's blessing : it would be a solemn mockery to entreat God to bless the Crystal Palace now, with the deliberate intention of despising His commands.

13. That which began and ended so well, must and will degenerate by the admission of persons on the Lord's Day. The lively interest which so many would have continued to feel in it, as a place of rational amusement, variety of information and scientific inquiry, both for themselves and their dependants, will be more than chilled—it will be destroyed, because the God of science will be dishonoured, and Mammon be enthroned.

14. That which has been the glory of this country will become a source of shame and disgrace ; and that which was so instrumental in completing Israel's destruction will equally expose England to Divine displeasure. " My Sabbaths they greatly polluted :

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then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness to consume them." (Ezek. xx. 13.)

15. "Them that honour me, I will honour." (1 Sam. ii. 30.) "The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it." (Prov. x. 22.) Great peace and prosperity attended the Great Exhibition. These were of God. God, at the commencement, was entreated for them; God, at the close, was thanked for them. Can peace and prosperity be looked for by the Company, except God be now honoured in the same way, viz., by the rejecting all proposals to open the Crystal Palace on the Lord's Day?

We know that when objections are made to railway trains and amusements on the Lord's Day, we are told we have no sympathy with the labouring classes, and wish to debar them from wholesome recreation. On the contrary, we rejoice in any step that can be taken to promote their health and comfort. We are thankful to see improved lodging-houses, and baths; and we hail with delight the early closing movement for the needful refreshment of the million. But when we hear of excursion trains and museums opened on the Lord's Day, we turn round and ask those gentlemen—"If you have so generous, so philanthropic, so disinterested a desire for the comfort and well-being of the million—then let it be shewn by one great, grand combination to release the million one half-day in the week, without diminution of the six days' pay." There is no proof that we care for the

health and recreation of the million, if we manifest that anxiety only, or chiefly, where the profit of a Company is concerned. In the present instance, the chief proprietors of the Crystal Palace are (as common report says) also chief proprietors of the line of railway which would convey visitors to the Crystal Palace. Thus they would be double gainers.

We have heard it affirmed by those interested in railways, that their men can go to some place of worship on the Lord's Day. Ask the men themselves and it will be found (with some exceptions) that the time allowed is very short, and must be taken from their needful rest. It will be discovered that, like backwoodsmen, a habit of working on the Sabbath renders men indifferent, unconcerned, and unwilling to take advantage of an opportunity when it does offer: by disuse, the principle of holy obedience is destroyed, and the force of early habits, and of a good education weakened. There is no such thing as a lawful compromise in breaking God's commandments. It has been long and frequently observed, that much travelling on the Continent lowered, in the minds of many, the reverence for the Lord's Day in which they had been brought up: they learnt to do at Rome as they did at Rome, and they came back to do in England as they did at Rome. If the Crystal Palace is open on the Lord's Day, thousands will be attracted from the country, lured away from the church-going bell, and will carry back a lowered estimation of God's best day; and habits will be quickly induced at variance

with the moral and spiritual welfare of themselves, and of those around them.

In short, we are on the brink of a precipice. The question of opening the London Post Office on the Lord's Day called forth much feeling. If we had not triumphed then, most serious evils would quickly have been introduced. First the servants, then the clerks, and by and bye the partners, would have been at the counting-house on the Lord's Day. Fear of competition would have been urged as an excuse : " I would not go if others would not, and thus start equal on the Monday morning." Much ridicule was cast upon those who spoke of the fine end of the wedge being introduced : but it would have been strictly in point ; it has been in the case of the railways. Who, at the outset, for one moment contemplated monster Excursion Trains, advertised to start from London Bridge and the Great Western on Easter Sunday and Whitsunday ? But if the Crystal Palace is open on the Lord's Day, there will be no fine end of the wedge, but its broad end at once. It would be one great deluge : the floodgates opened, a vast tide of ungodliness will rush in, and no Company will have power to say, " Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further."

Let us hope that Her Majesty the Queen, and Prince Albert, who have the welfare of the Crystal Palace much at heart, will use their high influence to prevent so glaring a departure from the good old custom of England, and so glaring a violation of the law of God. Let us hope that the whole bench of

Bishops, and the whole of the Clergy and Ministers of Religion, of all denominations, will exert all the influence they possess. There are many sound-hearted Christians, and many more who love peace and good order in this realm. There are many who know that good servants, and honest apprentices and journey men, loyal subjects, good husbands and good wives, and obedient children, are not made by Sabbath-breaking : these will do all that in them lies to prevent this fearful inroad upon all the home charities of the Christian Sabbath.

There is yet another hope : this Company must have some regard to their own character. They profess to wish to conduct the whole with the same decorum and respectability as the Great Exhibition was conducted : this cannot possibly be, if it be at all open on the Lord's Day. If all these hopes fail, we must then cast ourselves unreservedly on God, and beg Him to plead His own cause, and over-rule all to His own glory.

D9V
6/2/53